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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 24 November 1997, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/20 in which it took note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (A/52/374) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-third session on the development of cooperation between OAU and the organizations of the United Nations system.

II. Consultations and exchange of information

2. The Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU cooperate in a number of areas and consult regularly on key African questions with a view to coordinating initiatives and action. Since January 1997, in particular, they have discussed the need to build closer ties with a view to enhancing their mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa and for coordinating their efforts in that regard. They took an important step in that connection when they agreed, in January 1997, to meet twice a year, along with their senior advisers, to discuss priority areas of cooperation and to coordinate their efforts. Subsequently, they reached an understanding that the meetings would take place immediately following the OAU summits and early during the General Assembly.

3. The first such meeting between the two Secretaries-General and their advisers was held in Harare on 3 June 1997 during the OAU summit. Since then, they have met in New York in October 1997, in Addis Ababa in April 1998 and in New York in July 1998, and have exchanged views on key African issues of common interest and concern. A meeting between the Secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU was held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 1998 to review the implementation of programmes of cooperation and to agree on follow-up action.

III. Cooperation in the areas of peace and security

A. Department of Political Affairs

4. The United Nations Department of Political Affairs is responsible for the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements. It organizes biannual meetings, chaired by the Secretary-General, with the heads of regional organizations and arrangements, including OAU. Such a meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters on 28 and 29 July 1998, in which OAU was represented by its Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim. The topic of the meeting was cooperation for conflict prevention, focusing on the challenges of early warning and conflict prevention, the capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations to meet those challenges and practical modalities for collaborative interaction between them.

5. The Department also organizes meetings with members of the Africa Group in New York to brief them on priority issues of common concern and to exchange ideas and information. Arrangements have been made to ensure that such briefings and exchanges of ideas are undertaken regularly in order to address issues of concern expeditiously and to facilitate any follow-up action that may be required.

6. There are also ongoing contacts and consultations between the Department and the office of the OAU Permanent Observer in New York. Such coordination and exchange of information is deemed vital to the effort to strengthen and rationalize United Nations-OAU cooperation. To that end, the Department and the office of the Permanent Observer have agreed to hold monthly meetings to exchange information and to facilitate the coordination of actions and initiatives.

7. On the recommendation of the Department, a United Nations liaison office with OAU was established in Addis Ababa in April 1998 to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. The office will help to facilitate the exchange of information and the coordination of initiatives and efforts in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as well as in the democratization and peace-building processes in Africa, and will coordinate the implementation of programmes of cooperation between the United Nations system and OAU agreed to at the annual meetings of their secretariats. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has seconded a staff member to the liaison office.

8. The Department of Political Affairs is also responsible for the programme of cooperation between the United Nations system and OAU, including the organization of the annual meetings of the secretariats of the two organizations. Such a meeting was convened to evaluate the implementation of existing programmes of cooperation and to agree on new ones (Addis Ababa, 6-8 May 1998).

B. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

9. In the past year, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has increased efforts to enhance cooperation with OAU. The Office has seconded a staff member to the United Nations liaison office with OAU. Through the liaison office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs keeps OAU informed of United Nations actions to address humanitarian aspects of the crises in Africa in particular. The Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs and OAU have also begun planning joint workshops on post-conflict reconstruction.

10. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has initiated a series of thematic joint meetings and consultations with OAU on formulating strategies to enhance early warning systems and information-sharing arrangements in addition to harmonizing operations. The Office has periodically exchanged information with the Conflict Prevention Unit of OAU and has continued to discuss and explore ways to increase cooperation between the Humanitarian Early Warning System and OAU. The Office's integrated regional information networks in Nairobi and Abidjan have regularly shared information with OAU and provided it with all available reports.

11. In order to better prepare for potential emergencies, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, assisted OAU in implementing programmes intended to strengthen the capacities of African organizations. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction secretariat continued to maintain a strong presence in Africa with respect to technical assistance. It supports efforts to build national capacities for disaster and emergency management. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction national committees in Africa are supported by the Decade's secretariat in Geneva within the International Framework of Action for the Decade. The secretariat invited representatives from Algeria, Benin, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe to join the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade to increase awareness and promote international cooperation. The secretariat finances a number of training internships through its fellowship programme in several countries to increase technical expertise for development purposes in the region.

C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

12. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to provide advisory services and technical assistance to African Governments and to OAU and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in promoting and protecting human rights. OHCHR developed a framework strategy with three main components: assisting Governments in improving the enjoyment of human rights at the national level; assisting OAU and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in promoting and protecting human rights; and strengthening non-governmental and grass-roots organizations. The strategy has been communicated to all African Governments and to the Secretary-General of OAU, and consultations have been undertaken with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a view to mobilizing greater United Nations system-wide resources to support the realization of its objectives.

13. A project is being implemented by OHCHR that aims to strengthen Africa's regional mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights. Assistance was provided to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to improve its procedures and working methods, and the project supports the Commission in its catalytic role in establishing an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. OHCHR is assisting in the preparation of the First African Ministerial Conference on Human and Peoples' Rights, to be held in Luanda in October 1998. Specifically, OHCHR organized the mission of a staff member to Addis Ababa for discussions with the OAU secretariat in March 1998 which was followed by joint OAU/OHCHR mission to Luanda for discussions with the Government.

14. The High Commissioner has assigned a regional human rights resource person for southern Africa charged with facilitating, in coordination and consultation with UNDP resident representatives, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, developed at government request. The resource person will also provide advice, as requested, to Governments of the region and to the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community.

IV. Cooperation in the field of economic and social development

A. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

15. In May 1998, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated with the Department of Political Affairs in the organization of the annual meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries prepared and presented an analytical background paper on various initiatives on African development as well as on ways and means to harmonize them, in line with the relevant recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa.

16. The Office of the Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries also participated in the OAU summit held in Ouagadougou in June 1998. In addition to political issues, the meeting concentrated on the outcome of the first meeting of OAU and the African Economic Community (AEC) Ministers of Trade, in particular regarding Africa's position with respect to the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and the outcome of the second ordinary session of the Economic and Social Commission of AEC.

17. The OAU secretariat also participated in a number of activities and workshops organized or co-organized by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, including the Asia-Africa Workshop on Advancing Financial Intermediation in Africa (Mauritius, April 1998) and the International Task Force on Informal Sector Development in Africa. Also, OAU is a member of the Preparatory Committee for the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (October, 1998), which is entrusted with the drafting of the Agenda for Action to be adopted at the Conference.

B. Economic Commission for Africa

18. The joint secretariat of OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB) have adopted a work plan on major activities to be carried out for launching the operations of AEC up to 2000. Between 19 July and 21 August 1997, a mission of the joint secretariat visited most regional economic communities to hold consultations on the implementation of the work plan. The findings of the mission were discussed at the second ministerial session of the Economic and Social Commission of AEC (Cairo, 23 and 24 April 1998) and areas where AEC would strengthen its cooperation with the regional economic communities were identified.

19. In order to provide information on the status of the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, ECA organized briefing sessions in conjunction with the OAU ministerial meetings in Ouagadougou in 1998. Under the proposed Special Initiative work programme for the coming two years, there are plans to organize subregional seminars and workshops to advocate and stimulate implementation of the Special Initiative at the country level through the exchange of information on the practical experiences of countries. ECA will seek the active participation of OAU in those workshops and seminars.

20. OAU and ECA collaborate very closely in implementing the air transport policy of the region as spelled out in the Yamoussoukro Declaration. The two institutions worked together in the preparation of the 11th meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications (Cairo, 25-27 November 1997), coupled with a forum on transport and communications development in Africa.

21. Among the many actions undertaken jointly by OAU, ECA and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization was the in-depth mid-term evaluation of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991–2000). Data and information gathered from 21 African countries were used for the preparation and finalization of the mid-term report presented to the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Whole on Industrialization in Africa and to the 13th meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, both of which were held in Accra in May 1997.

22. OAU has taken an active role in the preparation of the second session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Development of Mineral Resources and Energy (Durban, South Africa, 21 and 22 November 1997). Two papers were presented by a high-level OAU delegation, including one by the African Energy Commission, the establishment of which was initiated jointly by OAU, ADB and ECA.

23. The Secretary-General of OAU and the Executive Secretary of ECA directed in February 1998 that the cooperation between their respective institutions be reviewed so that corrective measures could be taken in those areas that required strengthening. To that effect, two task forces were set up to look into the institutional framework of the

cooperation and the substantive matters respectively. At a recent meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU, it was agreed that ECA should host and chair coordinating meetings every three or six months to monitor the implementation of programmes of cooperation.

C. United Nations Development Programme

24. Assistance has been provided to OAU in the establishment of an Internet home page linked to the information/technology plan. An agreement was signed between OAU and Africa Online Ltd. for hosting a World Wide Web site for OAU, which has been in place since June 1998. Linkages were being set up on the Internet among OAU, local African missions, Ministries of Foreign Affairs of OAU member States, the United Nations, donor countries and UNDP country offices. Through the project OAU has sent missions to the subregional organizations to permit linkages between them and OAU headquarters to explore how they can best complement efforts of OAU in establishing an early warning system. UNDP has also funded the participation of the first General Assembly of the Federation of OAU Clubs, which was convened in Ouagadougou in May 1998.

25. The UNDP-assisted project on capacity-building for the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution ($3 million) provided for training of OAU officers in the Conflict Management Division on appropriate information analysis methodology, Central Organ members on conflict situations in Africa and staff in state-of-the-art approaches to resource mobilization, as well as training in conflict analysis, military strategy, conflict resolution, project formulation, monitoring and evaluation. A donors' meeting and round table are planned to be organized for OAU in the near future.

26. Currently, the Programme on Promotion of Africa's Economic Cooperation and Integration through the establishment of AEC ($2,151,322) has the objective of strengthening the regional economic communities and finalizing protocols as provided for in the treaty establishing AEC. An OAU Resource Mobilization Unit will also be set up.

D. United Nations Environment Programme

27. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has focused on the promotion of regional cooperation on the environment in its cooperation with OAU, mainly through providing support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). OAU, ECA and UNEP have continued to provide secretariat services to AMCEN. Through this arrangement, OAU and UNEP have made significant contributions towards collective endeavours in addressing the environmental and socio-economic problems of the region.

28. In November 1997, OAU, ECA and UNEP convened the seventh session of AMCEN in order to review the AMCEN constitution, rules of procedure and a proposal on contribution quotas to its trust fund, with a view to formalizing AMCEN as the African intergovernmental body on the environment, and also to deliberate on environmental issues of concern to the Africa region. It was decided at the session to institutionalize the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. Programme priorities for the region were also agreed upon including, among others, the development and management of freshwater resources, rational management of all types of forests, environmentally sound management of all types of waste and ratification and implementation of international environmental agreements of relevance to the region.

29. Within the framework of a decision taken at the 9th meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN (Nairobi, December 1996), the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, UNEP and OAU organized a Pan-African Conference on the Implementation of the Convention and follow-up in Africa on the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Pan-African Conference was held in Ouagadougou in March 1997, and its outcome was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of OAU in May 1997.

E. World Food Programme

30. In 1997, the operational expenditures of the World Food Programme (WFP) in sub-Saharan Africa amounted to $502 million, or close to 50 per cent of WFP total assistance during the year. Relief assistance provided by WFP to OAU member States exceeded $403 million in 1997, reaching more than 15 million victims of natural and man-made disasters. WFP was the main provider of food assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Africa, while OAU was engaged in finding lasting solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced persons.

31. In addition to the high level of relief activities implemented in 1997, WFP continued to provide development assistance to the region. This assistance was

channelled in accordance with the priority sectors identified by beneficiary countries themselves. In this endeavour, special attention was given to the mitigation of the negative effects of structural adjustment in several African countries as well as to agricultural and rural development activities.

32. About 40 per cent of all the food distributed in Africa was procured locally, either in surplus producing countries or in surplus producing areas of the recipient country. The promotion of such intraregional trade should facilitate the objective of regional economic integration. Furthermore, WFP relied heavily on private transport, which often crosses national boundaries, for overland food transport. Fifty per cent of the overall WFP expenditure for food transport was spent in Africa.

33. In its effort to increase the role of women, WFP initiated gender activities in both development and relief projects in Africa. Where a gender gap existed, in country programmes, WFP introduced a target of investing 60 per cent of resources in women and girls.

34. WFP was a major provider of skills and management training to local and counterpart staff in Africa. It continued to place emphasis on training activities in areas such as project identification and implementation, monitoring and reporting and food storage and management. It also continued to work closely with its African counterparts to improve early warning systems and response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

F. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

35. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) continued discussions with OAU on various ways of improving cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations. An OAU delegation visited the Centre in May 1998. A number of joint programme and project proposals were discussed, including joint organization of a seminar on human settlements planning and management in Africa and a proposed Africa regional ministerial meeting on the implementation of the habitat agenda. Discussions are continuing, and it is hoped that agreements will be reached subsequently on their joint implementation. Other areas of cooperation between the two organizations continue to be explored.

G. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

36. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to actively participate in the meetings of the OAU Commission on Refugees and extended assistance and support to the Commission during its visits to refugee camps and settlements in Africa. As requested in a resolution adopted at the OAU Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State and Government sessions in Harare in 1997, UNHCR has collaborated and will continue to cooperate with OAU in the preparations for the OAU Commission on Refugees Ministerial Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in Africa, scheduled to be held in Khartoum in December 1998.

37. UNHCR also worked with other OAU bodies, such as its Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. As chairman of the Coordinating Committee, UNHCR collaborated with OAU and the other members of the Committee in a consultative process to expand the mandate and enlarge the membership of the Committee, which culminated in the twenty-fifth session of the Coordinating Committee held in Maputo in 1997. UNHCR and OAU are developing modalities to implement the recommendations adopted at the Maputo meeting in order to further enhance the ability of the Committee to be more effective and relevant in dealing with the current refugee and humanitarian issues in Africa, particularly at the field level.

38. During the period under review, UNHCR and OAU engaged in a process of joint and bilateral consultations with the Governments concerned in the Great Lakes region to find durable solutions to the refugee problems there. In that regard, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OAU Secretary-General co-chaired a regional meeting on refugee issues in the Great Lakes region (Kampala, May 1998). OAU and UNHCR were to follow up on the recommendations, including cooperating with broader regional and international forums and institutions. The results of the regional meeting could provide important input to the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees to be held in December 1998.

39. In April 1998, UNHCR intensified its support to OAU in the area of early warning and conflict prevention. Building upon previous missions and consultations between OAU and UNHCR in this area, an experienced UNHCR staff member was seconded to assist the OAU Conflict Division in developing parameters for describing potential or actual conflict situations. UNHCR would continue to collaborate with OAU to facilitate a structured and systematic approach

to streamlining information and to reporting and analysing conflicts. In addition, OAU participated in a UNHCR-organized training seminar on emergency management in November 1997.

40. As a follow-up to previous meetings on peace-building held in Kampala, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Kigali, OAU, ECA and UNHCR and other United Nations agencies organized a regional workshop on best practices of women in peace-building and conflict resolution in November 1997. These complementary and mutually reinforcing activities on women in peacemaking and peace-building could provide useful input to the OAU/ECA African Women's Committee on Peace and Development, established in April 1998.

H. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

41. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provided support and assistance to OAU and AEC for the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials and to the Meeting of African Ministers of Trade (Harare, 6–9 April 1998), held in preparation for the second World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference. A round table was organized by UNCTAD (Geneva, 25 March) in cooperation with UNDP and AEC to provide an opportunity to representatives of African countries to exchange views on issues relating to the WTO Ministerial Conference. Two major issues were considered at the round table, namely, elements of a positive agenda for Africa for both the implementation of the WTO work programme and future activities at WTO, and mechanisms to enhance the effective participation of African countries in the multilateral trading system. In connection with the latter, African Ministers of Trade requested UNCTAD to provide assistance to African countries wishing to accede to WTO through, among other things, the use of a UNDP project on capacity-building for trade. Furthermore, a series of decisions was adopted with regard to the elements of a positive agenda for African States based on the preparatory work undertaken at the seminar.

42. UNCTAD also participated in the OAU Forum on Promotion of Financial Market Integration and Development in Africa (Mauritius, 15–17 July 1997), and made a presentation on the question of globalization of financial markets and its implications for developing countries.

43. UNCTAD has continued its cooperation with OAU and the League of Arab States in the context of the fourth Afro-Arab trade fair. UNCTAD participated in the second preparatory committee (Dakar, 5–8 May 1998), and discussions were under way for UNCTAD to participate in the fair to be held in Dakar in 1999 on issues related to cooperation, trade and trade facilitation.

44. OAU has been invited to participate in a conference being organized by UNCTAD on African development in a comparative perspective, to be held in Mauritius on 24 and 25 September. In addition to the OAU secretariat, all African countries have been invited to participate in this event, which would cover issues related to agricultural and industrial development, the role of trade including regional trade, and issues in the design of structural adjustment policies.

I. International Labour Organization

45. The priority objective of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the Africa region included reduction of poverty through the promotion of employment, the protection of workers and the promotion of democracy through social dialogue. In recent years, approximately half the financial resources put at the disposal of ILO for technical cooperation have been channelled to Africa. This has enabled the Organization to develop close cooperation with OAU in areas of common interest. Cooperation took a variety of forms, including joint technical activities, promotion of common policy goals, enhancement of tripartism and human rights, elimination of child labour, protection of migrant workers, refugees and displaced persons, enhancement of the participation of women and youth in the development process, action in respect to conflict-affected countries, fight against poverty, vocational rehabilitation and participation in each other's meetings.

46. Major joint technical programmes and activities implemented by ILO and OAU in the past included seminars and workshops covering the following themes: international labour migration, elimination of child labour, micro-economic analysis for economic integration, women's employment opportunities, and occupational safety and health. The joint technical secretariat of ILO and OAU also examined and reviewed activities pertaining to entrepreneurship and enterprise development, social security, refugees and displaced persons and vocational training.

47. In the area of tripartism and human rights, ILO provided technical assistance in strengthening tripartism within the framework of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission and continued to make significant financial and technical contributions to the Organization of African Trade

Union Unity and the Pan African Employers' Confederation. Cooperation was also directed at enhancing the implementation and ratification of international labour conventions.

48. Assistance concerning migrant workers included preparation of technical studies in the five subregions of Africa. The studies were major inputs to the OAU-sponsored seminar on inter-African migration held in Cairo. Cooperation with OAU in the advancement of women has been stepped up by the ILO contribution to the OAU conference on the girl-child held in Kampala.

J. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

49. Cooperation in the traditional areas of collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and OAU, such as joint promotion of food security, agricultural development and trade and regional cooperation and integration, benefited from the consistent support of the legislative organs and secretariat of OAU for follow-up to the World Food Summit, cooperation on the institutionalization of the Pan African Veterinary Vaccines Centre and the beginning of a partnership for the strengthening of African capacity to respond to the challenges of post-Uruguay Round agricultural trade.

50. Cooperation with the OAU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources on the Pan African Rinderpest Campaign has produced successes leading to consideration being given to the broadening of the Campaign's effort to cover a wider range of cross-border contagious livestock diseases. In fisheries, FAO and the OAU Scientific, Technical and Research Commission strengthened their cooperation through their participation in each other's technical meetings. In May 1998, FAO gave two technical presentations to the Scientific, Technical and Research Commission Inter-African Committee on Oceanography, Sea and Inland Fisheries at its fifth session.

51. The OAU Scientific, Technical and Research Commission has cooperated with FAO in the development of a regional programme for strengthening national capacities and regional cooperation in forestry research through a Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa.

52. FAO cooperation with AEC for the development of a common African agricultural programme received a boost in February 1998. The twentieth FAO regional conference for Africa, followed by the sixth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers, breathed new life into the process of developing the programme, in which FAO is the principal international development partner of OAU, providing renewed political support and operational directives and guidelines. Since then, FAO has designated a focal point on the common African agricultural programme and intensified its consultations and cooperation with AEC on the acceleration of the process. The impulse for OAU-FAO cooperation on the programme was further strengthened by the endorsement by the thirty-fourth OAU summit (Ouagadougou, June 1998) of the twentieth FAO regional conference recommendations on the programme.

K. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

53. During the period under review, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and OAU held their sixth Joint Commission consultation meeting (Paris, 15 May 1998) and agreed to reinforce the coordination of their actions and their cooperation in the areas of education, culture, information, science and a culture of peace. The recently reinforced UNESCO office in Addis Ababa worked closely with OAU, not only in defining the priority areas for cooperation to be discussed by the two organizations during this meeting, but also in the content of the agenda for the meeting.

54. UNESCO also participated in an international conference entitled "African women and economic development: investing in our future" (Addis Ababa, 28 April-1 May 1998). One of the conclusions of the conference was a tripartite agreement between UNESCO, OAU and ECA on women and a culture of peace, drafted in cooperation with the Committee of African Women for Peace. At the OAU meetings in Ouagadougou in June 1998, two decisions of interest to UNESCO were taken. The first concerned the coordination of actions between the OAU Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006) and the UNESCO Decade of Literacy, and the second, the promotion of a culture of peace. The UNESCO office in Addis Ababa is involved in the implementation of those two decisions.

55. The OAU Council of Ministers has recommended the implementation of two complementary projects – a cultural atlas of Africa and a pan-African guide to civic education. The UNESCO office in Addis Ababa participated in the first meeting of the technical committee for those projects in January 1998. The office will involve OAU in the various cultural activities it will be organizing in celebration of the

fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

56. UNESCO has continued its close collaboration with OAU on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. As part of the implementation of the African Decade for Education and the "basic education for all" component, a tripartite accord was signed on 24 July 1997 by OAU, UNESCO and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help for a programme of support to educational rehabilitation in Africa". The accord foresees the construction of primary schools and vocational training centres in all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa through the mobilization of extrabudgetary funds.

L. World Health Organization

57. The World Health Organization (WHO) has given support to OAU member States in implementing the Yaoundé Declaration on Polio Eradication in Africa and the Harare Declaration on Malaria Prevention and Control in the Context of African Economic Recovery and Development. In the joint struggle against HIV/AIDS on the continent, WHO has actively participated in many forums on HIV/AIDS and has supported OAU technically and financially by implementing the Dakar and Tunis declarations on AIDS. WHO has taken steps to improve the OAU clinic servicing the OAU staff and African diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa.

58. WHO participated actively in the preparation of the Pan African Ministerial Health Conference (Cairo, June 1998) on the follow-up to the Harare Declaration on Malaria Prevention and Control in the Context of African Economic Recovery and Development by providing a technical paper on malaria. WHO and OAU have agreed on an initiative for the establishment of a long-term joint OAU/WHO project associated with the Special Health Fund for Africa under which further fund-raising would be managed. They have also worked on the follow-up to and implementation of the Pan African Conference on Landmines (Kempton Park, South Africa, May 1997) by organizing the first consultative meeting in Addis Ababa in September 1997.

59. WHO and OAU collaborated on the evaluation of the Pan African Emergency Training Centre, which was followed by the initiation of the Emergency Health Training Programme, whose role was to strengthen regional and national capacity in emergency health management. OAU participated as a full member in the programme's steering committee. In the context of the African Information Society Initiative, WHO worked with OAU on establishing access and linkages between their information bases.

M. World Bank

60. A key development in the World Bank's collaboration with OAU occurred in January 1998 when the Bank met with OAU officials at OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. High-level cooperation was reaffirmed and a broad range of issues, including the Partnership for Capacity-Building in Africa, the Great Lakes region, debt and Bank partnerships with African organizations, were discussed. A follow-up meeting resulted in an agreement to send a Bank mission to OAU to work on implementing cooperative approaches to those issues.

61. In February 1998, Bank staff met with OAU officials to discuss the installation of the World Bank's Africa Live Database at OAU headquarters and to prepare a statistical capacity-building proposal on behalf of OAU. OAU has since submitted the proposal to European donor Governments. Bank staff returned to OAU to follow up on those capacity-building initiatives in May.

62. On 15 June 1998, the Secretary-General of OAU presented the Organization's perspective as a featured speaker of the World Bank Gender and Law Workshop in Washington, D.C. Bank staff attending annual OAU summit meetings have found them to be useful forums for substantive exchanges with their OAU counterparts on all areas of collaboration.

N. International Monetary Fund

63. The International Monetary Fund collaborated closely with bilateral and multilateral donors and other agencies of the United Nations system in coordinating aid, particularly in the context of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. This collaboration included participation in multilateral aid coordination conferences and debt rescheduling in the framework of the Paris Club. The Fund also closely followed and contributed to the ongoing deliberations of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee on ways to improve the efficiency of official development assistance and to better coordinate the activities of different donors in support of the adjustment and reform programmes of African countries. Moreover, together with the World Bank, the Fund has created a framework for collaborative action with other multilateral institutions and bilateral

creditors to resolve the external debt problems of the heavily indebted poor countries. Five African countries were among the first to be considered for debt relief under the initiative.

64. The Fund has also deepened its collaboration with various subregional economic organizations. The Fund's policy advice and surveillance functions, as well as its technical assistance to African countries, are consistent with and directly supportive of the efforts of AEC to foster regional and subregional economic integration as building blocks towards economic integration and cooperation on a continental scale.

65. The Fund provides financial assistance to African countries in support of their structural adjustment programmes through the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, the Extended Fund Facility, and stand-by arrangements. As of early June 1998, there were 27 arrangements in place with OAU member countries for a total commitment of 3.14 billion special drawing rights; the undrawn balance totalled 1.54 billion special drawing rights. Through its catalytic role, the Fund also assisted African countries in mobilizing additional resources from bilateral and multilateral donors.

O. World Intellectual Property Organization

66. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)/OAU Gold Medal Award ceremony took place during the OAU summit in Harare in June 1997. The OAU Chairman and the Director-General of WIPO presented the medal to the best African inventor.

67. In May 1998, WIPO received a delegation from the Scientific, Technical and Research Commission of OAU to discuss means of cooperation between the two organizations. The Chief of the Science and Technology Section of OAU was invited by WIPO to participate in a training course that was organized by the WIPO Academy (Geneva, June 1998).

68. WIPO and OAU held discussions with regard to the 1999 WIPO/OAU Gold Medal Award for the best African invention. Three gold medals will be distributed to winners at the award ceremony, scheduled to take place during the OAU summit in 1999. WIPO will also provide winners with financial rewards.

69. WIPO was invited by the OAU to cooperate in the organization of the forthcoming Afro-Arab Trade Fair and to have a WIPO stand at the fair. An OAU/WIPO working group was set up to administer a WIPO-funded project in the framework of the fair.

V. Cooperation in other areas

A. Universal Postal Union

70. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has continued to devote a large part of its technical assistance resources to projects in African countries. The Union organized, at its own expense, a conference of ministers responsible for postal services in sub-Saharan African countries (Abidjan, July 1996). The conference adopted the Abidjan Action Plan, covering development and improvement of thematic areas in customer needs and commercial strategies, quality of service and improvement of operations, human resources, management independence and postal development. UPU has contributed more than 1 million Swiss francs towards the implementation of the action plan over the period 1997–1999.

71. UPU, in collaboration with the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries of UNDP, the World Bank and the host country, organized a conference on postal reform for sub-Saharan African countries, which targeted ways and means to facilitate postal reform in sub-Saharan Africa in the light of mounting pressure from customers for improved quality of service, competition from parallel markets, deregulation and threats emanating from the advancement of information technology (Arusha, April 1998). The conference adopted a resolution on the implementation of the reform process by the participating countries.

72. UPU has decided to set up a regional support centre in Africa in 1998 for tracking postal items through an electronic data interchange linking postal administrations worldwide and will examine the possibility of setting up more centres in Africa.

B. World Meteorological Organization

73. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) established an additional subregional office in Nairobi in 1998 for the benefit of eastern and southern African countries. Some 195 fellows from various African countries undertook training in 1997 in several specialized fields of meteorology and hydrology with WMO assistance.

74. WMO has continued to implement the strategy and action plan on water resources policy and assessment developed by WMO and ECA. In that regard, a WMO working group on hydrology for the African region met in July 1998 and adopted short- and medium-term activities to

implement the strategy and action plan. OAU, ECA and subregional organizations were invited to the meeting.

75. A related activity was the implementation of subregional water resources assessment projects known as the Hydrological Cycle Observing System (HYCOS). During 1997 and 1998, the HYCOS project for southern Africa commenced implementation; the European Union provided funds to formulate the HYCOS project for eastern Africa; the Western African HYCOS project document was finalized and funds were being mobilized for implementation; and the European Union provided funds for the formulation of the Central Africa HYCOS project, which is in the final stage of preparation.

C. United Nations Drug Control Programme

76. OAU and the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) have continued to strengthen their cooperation in drug control matters. The focus of activities has been shifted towards implementing the OAU Political Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Control in Africa, which was formulated with UNDCP assistance and adopted at the OAU summit in July 1996. A new regional project between UNDCP and OAU started in late 1997, aimed at creating a drug control unit within the OAU secretariat. This three-year project provided training, advisory services and logistical support to the new drug unit, which was managed and staffed by African experts. The unit coordinated, monitored and advised member States in their implementation of provisions of the drug control action plan.

77. UNDCP is currently funding some 40 drug control projects with a volume of over $12 million at the national and regional levels, in the framework of the above initiatives. The network of field offices of UNDCP in Africa has accordingly been strengthened to further improve cooperation with regional and governmental bodies as well as with non-governmental organizations, and to mobilize and support drug control action at the grass-root level. Currently, the Programme's field operations throughout Africa are backstopped by four regional offices (Cairo for north Africa, Dakar for west and central Africa, Nairobi for east Africa and Pretoria for southern Africa) and one country office (Lagos).